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ENGLISH IN THE UPPER GRADES

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ENGLISH in the upper grades is not essentially different from English at any other level of instruction. It has a peculiar responsibility, however, for two reasons: first, the pupils concerned are at a period of unusual impressionability, of eager, restless activity, and of the consideration of problems which may be of great moment to their future failure or success. Some may leave school permanently at any moment; others await the compulsory age limit; some are gaining skills for immediate application in shop or forge; still others are laying the foundation for a prolonged career in high school and college. All face a common citizenship and a common American tradition. In the second place, there is for the seventh and eighth grades, a definite program, tending to the retention of pupils in school, to the recognition of individual differences, to the improvement of scholarship, to exploration for guidance, and to social experiences and adaptations necessary to successful citizenship both in school and out. It may not be too extravagant to insist that the conscious recognition of these purposes and a willingness to set aside whatever in her program does not contribute to them is the first requisite of a successful teacher of English in the upper grades.

Especially is emphasis necessary in those subjects of study which have behind them a long academic tradition. Already investigations in the field of English indicate but little change in the traditional content thus handed down. One has but to list in one column the aims of education, or the interests of adolescent boys and girls, and in another, the course of study now prevailing in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, to see what notable incongruities exist.

The necessity for extensive reading versus the intensive study of a few literary classics is recognized by school leaders everywhere. Yet Miss Stroh, in her recent investigation of literature in grades seven, eight, and nine, finds the majority of teachers of English in the upper grades still adhering to an intensive study of traditional materials.¹ Extreme cases, for instance, show 24 periods spent upon *Silas Marner* and 25 on *The Man Without a Country*. Studies of children's interests in reading give increasing evidence year by year as to the type of content which appeals to youth. Too frequently, as in the Winnetka book list, the intensity of interest centers rather noticeably upon those books cast aside by teachers or librarians as mere

¹ Stroh, M. Margaret. *Literature for Grades VI, VIII, and IX*. Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 232. 1926.

"trash." Elementary school teachers could devote themselves to few problems with greater profit than to a study of the actual reading interests of boys and girls, to an investigation of the reasons for the appeal of certain books, and to an analysis of those works of higher literary merit which may be made to satisfy the same interests.² The "reading ladder" of the librarian which leads upward step by step from where children are to where they might be, is worthy of the consideration of every teacher of English.

A very hopeful sign is the abundance of lively and interesting textbooks now appearing as contributions to the new tendency toward enrichment. Series like *Literature and Life*³ and *Literature and Living*,⁴ individual classics like *Daniel Boone*, *Wilderness Scout*, *Boy Life on the Prairie*, and others of Miss Center's offerings for the junior high school,⁵ biographies such as *Luther Burbank and His Plant School*, *Northward Ho!*⁶ and the *Story of My Life* by Helen Keller,⁷ and such delightful collections of recent verse as the new edition of *This Singing World*, *Open Gates*, or *Yesterday and Today*,⁸ all augur well for a broadening of the traditional curriculum and a conscious attention to the interests of adolescent boys and girls.

As the wealth of the new material gradually breaks in upon the course of study, a new technique will be necessary to combine the new and the old, and to give each its rightful emphasis. For one can scarcely agree with the extremist who would have nothing but individual reading in the upper grades of the elementary school, any more than he can subscribe to the older intensive analysis of the single literary classic. What the new movement in education aims to

produce is a common culture of ideas (not of archaic expressions), a common association with the familiar characters of past and present (not minutely dissected and critically examined, but warmly personalized and familiarly conceived) supplemented by a wide reading in the direction of individual tastes and purposes. There are those who feel that success will come through the contract method of instruction. There are others who look to association with the library and the formation of the reading habit as the all-important desideratum. However the result is brought about, it is essential to the forward movement in teaching literature.

Whoever has grappled with the problem of extensive reading in the upper grades of the elementary school knows the practical difficulty of acquiring books. A recent study of school equipment in Minnesota, for instance, reveals a striking absence of library facilities even in certain up-to-date schools. We have drives for athletic equipment, drives to buy pictures, and drives to purchase swings and slides for the school playground. It may be that the best cause to which elementary school teachers can devote themselves at the moment is a drive to *fill the shelves of the school library*.

A second problem which must concern the teacher of English in the elementary school is the mastery of the mechanics of reading. Consideration of the problem shows at once the necessity for the differentiation of instruction on the basis of pupil ability. Results of tests in reading commonly show a range of five years or more between the best and the poorest readers in the same class. Instruction of small groups having a common weakness in reading, therefore, becomes imperative. The preparation of individual drills based upon informational materials is a part of the work of every teacher. Needless to say, the segregation of work of this sort from the lesson in literary appreciation is a foregone conclusion. The reward for its successful com-

² For two of the most recent of such lists see *The Winnetka Graded Book List*, American Library Association, 1926. The so-called "trash" list appears in the *Elementary English Review* for February and March, 1927. Terman, L. M. and Lima, M. *Children's Reading*. Appleton, 1926.

³ Scott-Foresman and Company, Chicago.

⁴ Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City.

⁵ Allyn and Bacon, Chicago.

⁶ The Macmillan Company, New York.

⁷ The Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

⁸ Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.

pletion may well be the privilege of browsing in the library for new and interesting materials to bring back to the class.⁹

Studies such as that of Irion suggest a further analysis of the comprehension difficulties of the more traditional literary materials. As a result of a series of tests based upon the study of four classics, Irion discovered that in fact comprehension the average pupil fails, after a single reading, in 28 statements out of 70. In measuring word knowledge he found 400 pivotal words in every seven pages of material. Of these the average pupil would have to look up 160. "It is a false idea," he insists, "to think that the average ninth grade pupil has reading comprehension ability to get a reasonable understanding of literary selections by the mere act of reading."¹⁰ In promoting a program, therefore, of extensive reading in the upper grades, the teacher must be cognizant of the reading difficulties of the individual, and place emphasis in the *extensive* program upon those selections which are within the grasp of the pupils concerned.

The composition phases of English in the upper grades suffer from the fact that they were formerly taught as separate subjects with a special time allotment for each. The reduction of grammar, spelling, and composition to the common denominator of *oral and written expression*, is particularly difficult for the teacher trained under the old system. In spite of notable progress in this direction, grammar still tends to be taught with little reference to composition, and spelling with a similar disassociation from actual use. Too frequently where the new time allotment will not permit of the old number of hours of composition and grammar, composition tends to be slighted, and grammar given full sway. The reasons

are obvious. No one knows how to *teach* composition. It is a comparatively simple matter to go from one cover of a grammar book to the other. The material is all there for the pupil to master. It requires little outside preparation and no special originality on the part of the teacher once she herself has mastered the content. Furthermore, the results are tangible and therefore frequently measured by tests sent out from the central administrative office.

Such a presentation of conditions is obviously unfair to the many teachers throughout the country who have made remarkable strides during the last ten years in reducing grammar to a subordinate place in the curriculum. It ignores, also, the minimum essentials movement, which, properly administered and rightly understood, may do more than any other single movement to give *expression* the central emphasis in the English program. On the other hand, the very fact that so many persons in places of authority, especially those whose opinions appear in our professional magazines, are supporting the forward movement in expression blinds us to the prevalence of the more traditional practice in many of our schools. One has only to examine the sales of textbooks in grammar and composition throughout the country to discover that the more progressive among them are not conspicuously near the top.

The recommendation of the curriculum committee of the Department of Superintendence, reporting in Dallas last March, should be known to teachers everywhere: "Where good English is generally spoken and with abler pupils, probably not more than one-fifth of the time devoted to oral and to written expression will be required for grammar. For less able pupils, especially those from homes in which poor English is used, perhaps two-fifths of the time will be necessary. The committee thinks that *two-fifths of the time for expression is under any conditions a maxi-*

⁹ An especially helpful discussion of this whole problem occurs in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. The Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ill. 1925.

¹⁰ Irion, W. H. *Comprehension Difficulties of Ninth Grade Students in the Study of Literature*. Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 189. 1925.

mum for a systematic course in grammar."¹¹

"How can I teach eleven uses of the noun to seventh grade pupils in two-fifths of four periods a week?" The response is not untypical. Nor is the teacher to be particularly blamed for her position. The eleven uses of the noun (among them the adjunct-accusative) are listed in her course of study, and she is expected to teach them in the time allotted. On the other hand, it is the privilege of the teacher of English to acquaint the administrator with the results of investigations in her own field. She may tell him, for instance, of Hoyt's discovery that knowledge of formal grammar correlated only .23 with composition ability, and .28 with ability to interpret the printed page;¹² that in a similar study at the University of Minnesota, results of examinations in formal grammar correlated most highly with those in arithmetic, next with those in history and geography, and least with those in composition.¹³ It seems likely that when the course of study in grammar has been reduced to its purely functional elements a much higher correlation will be obtained. Pending that time, however, the burden of proof rests with those who lay claim to the efficacy of the teaching of grammar as an aid to oral and written expression.

The search for the functional elements in grammar has taken the form of extensive investigations of actual pupil errors in both written and spoken English. Teachers of English cannot afford to be unfamiliar with the results.¹⁴ Outstanding among them are these: A relatively small number of errors

repeated with great frequency make up the bulk of the list. On the whole, errors do not diminish in frequency from the third grade through the eighth, and not notably so from the ninth grade through the thirteenth. A large share of the errors occur in verbs, especially in the confusion of the past tense with the past participle in fourteen common verbs. Probably ninety per cent of all errors occur in matter of syntactical redundancy, double negatives, agreement of subject and verb, present tense, past tense, perfect participle, and the cases of pronouns.

One of the most salutary exercises in which elementary school teachers could engage is the comparison of this list with the average textbook in grammar or composition in order to discover how many of the topics discussed therein have actual bearing upon the grammatical problems of children's speech and writing. In many cases this connection will be discovered only by minute analysis and careful experimentation. The course of study, for instance, based upon Charters' analysis of pupil errors recommends special stress upon the plurals of nouns in order to avoid failure in agreement between subject and predicate. Analysis of pupil errors shows the two factors commonly involved: (1) failure to recognize a compound subject, and (2) lack of knowledge of the fact that while "s" makes a noun plural, it makes a verb singular. Again how much grammar does a pupil need to know in order to avoid confusion of a past tense with a past participle? Possibly, the principal parts of the verb plus the fact that a past participle must be accompanied by an auxiliary. Possibly not that,—the problem has not been scientifically studied.

Again, counts of the frequency of English constructions aid the teacher in her determination of the relative emphasis in the grammar course. In the material examined by Stormzand and O'Shea, for example, the following facts are significant:

¹¹ The Fifth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence, Chapter IX, p. 112. *English Curriculum in the Junior High School, Chapter IX*, pp. 87-146. National Education Association, Washington, D. C. 1927.

¹² Hoyt, Franklin, S. *The Place of Grammar in the Elementary School Curriculum*, Teachers College Record, Nov. 1906, Vol. VII, no. 5, pp. 1-34.

¹³ Boraas, J. *Formal Grammar and the Practical Mastery of English*. Doctor's Thesis, University of Minnesota, June, 1917.

¹⁴ Among the important studies are these: Charters, W. W. *Minimal Essentials in Elementary Language and Grammar*, Sixteenth Yearbook, Part I, National Society for the Study of Education, pp. 85-110. 1917. Johnson, Roy I. *Persistence of Error in English Composition*, School Review, 25:555-580.

- (1) 85.6 per cent of all genitives are genitives of connection (a three months' holiday); 13.7 per cent indicate actual possession.
- (2) 98 per cent of all verbs are in the indicative mood.
- (3) 80 per cent of all verbs are in the third person.¹⁵

How will these facts influence the teaching of possessive case, of the subjunctive mood, or of the conjugation of verbs, giving equal emphasis to all the persons?

When the functional elements of grammar have been discovered, they will be taught as *functional* elements with constant reference to their use in speech or writing. The most important fact concerning a proper noun will be its *capital* letter, (and Father and Mother will have at least equal stress with the Nile and the Ganges); the most important fact concerning the dependent clause will be its *dependence*, not its part of speech; and the most important fact concerning a participle will be that it cannot be the main verb of a statement.

The result, it is hoped, will be *a few essentials mastered*. Dr. Leonard reports to us concerning the mere knowledge of the sentence: "The placing of periods is by no means fixed in most pupils' habits, even in the last year of the high school. There is a slight improvement grade by grade, but mastery nowhere, by a great majority of even the highest classes."¹⁶ Could there be any better argument for the elimination of the adjunct-accusative and the eleven uses of the noun?

Two principles, therefore, may well be kept before the teacher and the pupil throughout the work in English grammar: (1) the chief reason for the study of grammatical forms is the presence of errors in

the speech and writing of the individuals concerned; and (2) the gradual reduction of these errors in oral and written expression is the only valid test of success in the subject.

It is difficult to lay down, especially in a few sentences, the basic principles of composition in the upper grades of the elementary school. First, perhaps, should come a rightful emphasis upon both oral and written composition as of value in and of themselves. Although each may contribute largely to success in the other, and although together they may serve the interests of the lesson in literature, each in itself plays an important part in the life activities of boys and girls. It therefore merits attention in the course of study in English.

Second, these life activities of boys and girls offer vital opportunities for classroom work in composition. The affairs of home and school, the experiences and ambitions of each individual, and the common activities of the group as a whole furnish abundant materials for work in speech or writing. Correlation so far as possible with the content of every subject in the curriculum not only enlivens the interest in written and oral expression, but emphasizes the value of effective English in every activity of the school. Assembly programs, community drives, matters of school policy and of individual success all have a part in the thought and discussion of boys and girls, and therefore in their course in English expression.

Third, such activities give social motive to work in English composition which tends to lift it out of the realm of the class-room exercise and into the atmosphere of the mutual sharing of experience and the co-operative promotion of projects of school and community life.

Fourth, activities of this nature offer no escape from the consideration of the less entertaining matters of correctness in form and expression. They merely furnish a

¹⁵ Stormzand, M. J., and O'Shea, M. V. *How Much English Grammar?* Warwick and York, Baltimore, 1924.

¹⁶ Leonard, S. A. *The Wisconsin Tests of Sentence Recognition*, *The English Journal*, XV, no. 5, pp. 348-357, May, 1926.

PUPIL ACTIVITIES IN SILENT READING TEXTS

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HOW TO TRAIN for effective study attitudes and habits is an issue that confronts every teacher. Study may be defined as a process of recognizing and interpreting meaning; a process of reflecting upon ideas in the light of experience. It involves application of thought to some practical situation. It is preceded by a conscious purpose which may arise from either directed or incidental stimulus. However, it is a process of thinking.

The activities involved in the technique of teaching reading, the heart of the curriculum, are a foundation for training in study attitudes and habits. The child who does not interpret the meaning of what he reads and does not recognize the relation of one idea to another can not solve an arithmetic problem without assistance. If he does not carry on some form of collateral thinking by way of comparing, analyzing and evaluating the context, he will have nothing but bare facts.

It is the purpose of the present study to determine as nearly as possible the type of pupil activities emphasized by authors of some typical silent reading texts, that is, the kind of *mental processes* involved in the suggested study activities.

Method and Source. A survey of silent reading texts for grades two, three, four, and five was made. Three series, published since 1920, were selected as typical representatives.

The questions and suggestions that are at the beginning, within, and at the end of each selection were used as a source for determining the types of study activities suggested to the reader. The activities and the frequency of occurrence in each reader

were tabulated.

Results. The data reveal four general types of mental processes involved in the activities recommended by the authors of the silent reading texts. The general types of mental processes and the activities that constitute each are listed below.

Processes involving association and memory of facts.

Response to factual questions, such as "How did the Woodman get ready for the Dwarfs?"

Selecting the right response, such as "Trees give us (gold, apples, boys)."

Response to true and false statements.

Completing sentences, such as "All birds can. . . ."

Processes that direct attention to study attitudes.

Response to questions that direct attention to logical parts of the content, such as "Make a title for each paragraph."

Questions that direct attention to meaning of words and phrases, such as "Use other words which have the same meaning" and "Explain the meaning of the following words."

Response to questions that direct attention to reading content, such as "Read to find out how you should feed a dog."

Stating questions, such as "Make five good questions."

Re-reading, such as "Re-read to get all the facts given."

Processes that stimulate initiative, thought and self expression.

Judging and evaluating statements, such as "Read a sentence which proves that the people like the Airedale."

Concluding what things are by descriptions of them.

Response to questions that involve originality and initiative of expression, such as "Why are windows made of glass?" and "Tell what you would do if you were a man."

Perceptual processes—attaching meaning in reading content to other experiences.

Dramatizing.

Response to directions, such as "Draw a red balloon."

Correlating reading content with other activities, such as "Start a class book of Indian legends" and "Find pictures of Washington and Lincoln and compare the two men."

Making scenes revealed in reading content, such as "Draw a picture of the part of the story you enjoy most."

TYPES OF MENTAL PROCESSES AS INDICATED BY THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOUND IN THREE SERIES OF SILENT READING TEXTS FOR GRADES TWO, THREE, FOUR, AND FIVE.

Type of mental process	Questions and Suggestions Reader Series		
	A	B	C
Processes involving association and memory of facts.....	648	880	683
Processes that direct attention to study attitudes	58	1046	496
Processes that stimulate initiative, thought, and self expression	152	729	281
Perceptual processes—attaching meaning in reading content to other experiences	142	22	240

The data as summarized in Table I reveal the following tendencies:

1. The tendency as exemplified in series A is to center the child's attention upon the acquisition of facts. Comparatively, there are very few questions and suggestions that stimulate initiative in thought and self expression; that promote study attitudes; that direct attention to attaching meaning in the context to other experiences. This series contains more than five times as many questions and suggestions directing the child's attention to facts, than it does to

any of the other important processes. Very few activities involve study attitudes. Authors of this type of silent reading texts are more concerned with activities that involve mere memory processes than they are with those that train in thinking ability and effective study attitudes. These authors do not consider the major problems of directing the child's attention to reading for a definite purpose, to reflecting upon the meaning of what is read, and to evaluating the content. Of course the child should read for the purpose of obtaining facts, but mere memory processes have comparatively little value.

2. Another tendency, as exemplified by series B, is to direct the child's attention primarily to study attitudes. Adequate attention is given to stimulating initiative in thought and self expression, also to attainment of facts. The fundamental purpose of this series is evidently to train for effective study and thinking habits. Such activities will result in a growth of understanding. The content of what is read will have connection with previous experiences and will therefore have significance. On the other hand if the pupil's attention is directed only to reproduction of the content, he is losing an opportunity to develop attitudes that will function in other situations than the memory of facts in a particular selection.

3. There is a tendency, as exemplified by series C, to suggest activities that promote general training. Although the major emphasis is given to acquiring and memorizing facts, other important processes have liberal consideration.

The authors of silent readers should suggest a technique that stimulates study attitudes and thinking processes. Such activities will involve training in memory processes as well as thinking and study attitudes. The objective should be general rather than specific.

NEW DELIGHTS IN BOOKS

CLARISSA MURDOCH

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LAST YEAR there came from the National Park at Mesa Verde, Colorado, a book for boys. It was written by Deric Nusbaum, the young son of the superintendent of the park. Children who read of the interesting life lived by Deric in that fascinating land will eagerly greet a book by Deric's mother, Aileen Nusbaum. When her boy was a mere child he was adopted into the Zuñi tribe. He used to listen to the old tribesmen as they told the legends of their own race. Quietly sitting in the background, Mrs. Nusbaum made careful note of the tales, for she realized that the times were changing and that when the old men had departed there would be no one left to pass along by word of mouth these ancient stories. In *The Seven Cities of Cibola*—G. P. Putnam's Sons—she has retold for children sixteen of these myths. "Long ago there were seven terraced cities. All red gold in the sunshine and so fair to see were they that the gods came down and wondered what men had made." The legends are simple, dramatic, beautiful in their word pictures, full of the atmosphere of the Southwest. Corn-cakes, gophers, turquoises, coyotes, piñon trees, tarantulas—the words alone call up vivid pictures of the land. Margaret Nowell Finnan has beautifully illustrated the book in color and black and white. Her work is based on authentic Zuñi designs.

There are so few fine books for girls in their teens it is not strange that librarians are enthusiastically praising *Once in France* by Marguerite Clément—Doubleday, Page and Co. The author tells ten stories of girls from various provinces of France. Although they are tales of long

ago, so vividly are they presented and in such a modern manner that the heroines seem very much alive. There is the delightful tale of "dear little Duchess Anne" who had to learn the lesson of humility before she could be cured of goiter; the appealing story of Joan of Arc and her friend Heliote; the pathetic tale of the poor little Princess Shephardess; "The Baleful Cart," grim legend of the French Revolution; even a humorous one, "Beware the Chest." Mlle. Clément reminds us that the stories that seem sad are not sad, "only they are beautiful and old and an old, beautiful story is seldom very gay." On finishing the book a child will have, in addition to the stories, some knowledge of French history, as well as of the characteristics of the people. The author's love of her country is apparent on every page. She speaks of "Provence, such a dear corner of France that people have flocked there ever since there were people at all." "Alsace has quaint old cities, for instance, all spiked with steep, high roofs, full of eyes like a peacock's tail." Of Louraine she says, "You see, I was born there, and I love everything about it, from the way the people speak, to the way the rivers flow—which is the same way; harmoniously and leisurely." The book is written in an intimate, friendly style, with many delightful "asides." Illustrations by Germaine Denonaine are exactly suited to the text.

Five little girls of our neighborhood met at the house not long ago to attend a club recently formed by them. Just at that moment, I arrived with a big parcel of books. Abandoning their meeting they all crowded around me, watching eagerly as I

cut the string and took out the books. They handled them lovingly with little squeals of delight as they caught sight of some particularly attractive jacket. At the bottom of the pack was a little book of plays, *Little Robin Stay-Behind* by Katherine Lee Bates—The Woman's Press. "This is just what we need for the club," said the president. She picked it up and they ran off to their meeting. An hour later in they trooped, fairly radiating joy, all talking at once. "Oh, we found the nicest play, *Mother Time's Family*. We've chosen our parts and have planned our costumes. Some of us have to take two parts but that does not matter, for they are short. We are going to practice now." For several days there was much rummaging about in the boxes where they kept discarded clothing, to see what they could find. The youngest child, who had to double as Sunshine and Rain perhaps had the hardest task for as Sunshine she must dress as a yellow butterfly, while the garb of Rain was "a loose robe of silvery gray." The children range in age from eight to eleven, just the years when they are most interested in simple little plays in rhyme. The book contains plays about Christmas, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, April Fool's Day, and other holidays—a play for each month. Katherine Lee Bates, Professor of English at Wellesley College is well known as the author of *America, The Beautiful*. She has written other books for children. The book is illustrated by charming silhouettes.

It is always a pleasure to mention a new book by William Beebe. Teachers and parents enjoy his writings so much that it is fitting to include them in a list of books for children. Even young children can enjoy selected episodes. *Pheasant Jungles*, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons will be especially interesting to older boys. In eight chapters, each complete in itself, he writes of his "adventures, servants and thoughts." He has a keen sense of the dramatic, a rare

appreciation of the beautiful, a lively wit. He also has the ability to make his readers feel this, whether he is describing a new pheasant, a singing tortoise, or an attempt to eat a durian, which has, he says, "a powerful personality." Of his life on a house-boat he remarks: "To wake in a tent, open the flaps, and look out is good; to sit up in one's blanket cocoon in a hammock and see the jungle dawn is better; but best of all is opening one's eyes in a house-boat bunk and without further movement seeing water and jungle and sky, and the exciting early morning doings of fish, crocodiles, birds, and monkeys. One feels as yet unburdened with a human frame; and for an hour *I am only a pair of disembodied eyes, which search and record, begrudging even the interruption of winks, and viewing all through fresh-colored, sidewise vision.*" I italicized these words because I think they explain the secret of the vibrant quality of his writing.

Now that Mexico is so often mentioned on the front page of the daily newspapers, adults, as well as children, wish they knew a little more about the history of that turbulent neighbor of ours. To answer such questions Helen Ward Banks has written *The Story of Mexico*, including *The Boy's Prescott*—Frederick A. Stokes Co. *The Boy's Prescott* has an established reputation as a vivid story and as a reference book for children studying history. The author has added to the earlier book bringing the tale down to the present time. She ends the book on an optimistic note. "Mexico is still struggling up into the light, climbing a little higher after each fall." There are twelve illustrations in color by A. D. McCormick.

Books about circus life have been numerous of late. Charles Hawkes has just written *Junglo Jo*—Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co. This story of a circus elephant begins

in the Malay Jungle and ends in an American park. There are all sorts of adventures, including the detailed account of an elephant drive. A little native boy plays a large part in the story.

Annie Russell Marble has adapted the story of *Leather Stocking* so that a child may read it in one volume. She has chosen the most dramatic episodes and arranged them chronologically. Throughout the book the author has retained Cooper's own words. D. Appleton and Co. are the publishers.

For families interested in trees, much worth while information may be found in *A Year in the Wonderland of Trees* by Hallam Hawksworth—Charles Scribner's Sons. The book is endorsed by the American Forestry Association. It is profusely illustrated.

LIST OF BOOKS IN THE ORDER MENTIONED

- THE SEVEN CITIES OF CIBOLA. By Aileen Nusbaum. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1926. 167 pages.
- ONCE IN FRANCE. By Marguerite Clément. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1927. 246 pages.
- LITTLE ROBIN STAY-BEHIND. By Katherine Lee Bates. New York: The Woman's Press. 1924. 229 pages.
- PHEASANT JUNGLES. By William Beebe. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1927. 243 pages.
- THE STORY OF MEXICO. By Helen Ward Banks. New York: F. A. Stokes Co. 1926. 431 pages.
- JUNGLE JO. By Clarence Hawkes. Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co. 1926. 251 pages.
- THE STORY OF LEATHER STOCKING. By James Fennimore Cooper, Adapted by Annie Russell Marble. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1926. 283 pages.
- A YEAR IN THE WONDERLAND OF TREES. By Hallam Hawksworth. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1926. 212 pages.

ENGLISH IN THE UPPER GRADES

(Continued from Page 195)

more reasonable motivation. Because there are problems to be discussed, ideas to be set forth, and projects to be pursued, attention to mechanical details is not only reasonable but inevitable.

Fifth, if pupils cannot be expected to show a mastery of the fundamental writing skills by their progress into the upper elementary grades it is even more obvious that they need continued instruction in the development and organization of thought. Ofttimes attention to matters of grammatical correctness replaces in the classroom the careful gathering and organization of materials, the building up of adequate vocabulary, and the critical evaluation of the results. Constructive teaching of this

sort is one of the primary functions of the teacher of English.¹⁷

Finally, inasmuch as the content of English composition is widening to include all subjects of the curriculum, and inasmuch as the establishment of correct habits of speech is a matter of practice throughout every hour of the day, it is the business of every teacher to see to it that correctness and clearness of speech permeate the work in every classroom. Conscious coöperation in this as in all other matters pertaining to the habit formation of boys and girls is one of the fundamental principles of all instruction.

¹⁷ For more detailed treatment of this topic, see Webster, E. H., and Smith, Dora V., *Teaching English in the Junior High School*. Yonkers-on-Hudson, World Book Company. 1927.

THE GRAMMATICAL ERROR PIRATES

(Playlet for the Seventh or Eighth Grade)

EVELYN A. CAREY

Ypsilanti, Michigan

Dramatis Personae

Pirates	Traders
JOHN SLANG	FIRST TRADER
DOUBLE NEGATIVE	SECOND TRADER
SPLIT INFINITIVE	NEPTUNE
DANGLING PARTICIPLE	

Suggestions for Dramatization

For boats, the pirates can use rocking chairs and slowly rock across the stage. A pirate flag may be tied to the back of the chair. For reefs, overturned chairs might be used with the name of the error printed upon a pasteboard sign and hung on them. The harbor of success may be represented by an arch with the words "Harbor of Success" printed on it, and each trader should pass under the arch before the curtain falls.

SCENE I

(The sea. Harbor of Success in the distance. Reefs of Double Negative and Slang. Storm of Bad English. Lightning and Thunder. Enter two boats of a fleet of pirates piloted by Pirate Slang, and Pirate Double Negative.)

JOHN SLANG:

Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum!
Three dead men on a dead man's chest.
Dum te dum.

(Sings) Let 'er rain
Let 'er pour
Old John Slang
Has a treasure store.

Port Success in the distance!
Hurrah, there's luck to boot—
Soon's we strike rock bottom

We'll divvy up the loot.

Yo ho *(Crash as Slang flounders on the Reef Slang)*.

Curses on the bloomin' luck!

It's the Reef Slang, too, I've struck.

All my treasure trove's for naught.

In vain my battles have I fought.

Take my advice, leave slang alone,

Or you'll founder on this cursed stone.

(Sinks).

DOUBLE NEGATIVE:

There goes old John Slang

Foundered on the Reef of Slang

But—

(Sings) There isn't any need not to
worry any more

For old Double Negative is safe
by Slang

And he has a chest full of gold
treasure store

And he isn't going to worry
that he won't never hang.

(Enter First Trader)

FIRST TRADER:

Beware of the reef ahead
Or you'll find a watery bed.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE:

There isn't any need not to—*(Crash! as Double Negative founders on the Reef of Double Negative)*.

Alas, alas, 'tis all too true!

I passed by slang but not by you,

For double negatives I see

Have made my grave the watery sea.

(Sinks).

FIRST TRADER:

For Pirates Slang and Double Negative

A watery grave was all the gods could
give.
For while they sought the Harbor of
Success,
They murdered English and all hope of
happiness.
If I can profit by this experience,
I'll reach the harbor, and then go from
hence
And reap success upon the sea of life
Without more trouble, pain, or grief, or
strife.
(Exit, entering Harbor of Success).

SCENE II

(Another part of sea. Harbor of Success
seen from different angle. Reefs of Split
Infinitive and Dangling Participle. Storm
of Bad English still raging. Enter Pirates
Split Infinitive and Dangling Participle.
Enter a trader.)

SPLIT INFINITIVE:

To always be a-sailing on the sea
The broad sea which the pirates call their
home
To be free, aye, to always be so free
To roam, aye yes, the seas to always
roam.

DANGLING PARTICIPLE:

What of our cronies Slang and Double
Negative?

SPLIT INFINITIVE:

That information would that I could
give.
Here comes a trader, we'll stop him ere
he goes
To straightway see if by chance he knows
their woes.

DANGLING PARTICIPLE:

Ho there, Trader, we'd have a word with
you.
Being storm weather, we've missed our
cronies two
Hi, there, stranger, speak up if you know.
Else, being pirates, thy keel shall feel a
blow.

SECOND TRADER:

A trader friend of mine
Coming from yon port
Speaks of a pirate Slang
And a comrade, too, a sport
Called Double Negative
Who laughed and jeered at fear
And murdered our fair tongue
Until, 'tis sad to hear,
They foundered on the rocks.
And 'ere I go my way
List to some good advice,
Else you'll not clear the bay—

SPLIT INFINITIVE:

Enough. Tell me no more.
There is no one alive
Who dared to ever preach
To Split Infinitive. (Crash! as Split In-
finitive founders on Reef of Split In-
finitive).

DANGLING PARTICIPLE:

O ho, you spoke too soon—
No, don't cry help to me,
For the harbor must be reached
Delaying no more at sea. (Crash! as
Dangling Participle founders and goes
down).

SECOND TRADER:

Here is a lesson to be learned:
Dangling Participle, Split Infinitive
Both have foundered on the Reefs of
Errors,
Never more on this earth to live.
So I shall try to speak correctly
And pass the Reefs of Errors
And reach the port "Success" directly.
(Exit toward Harbor of Success).

SCENE III

(Twenty thousand leagues under the sea.
Neptune seated on a coral rock. Four
pirates arraigned before him).

NEPTUNE:

What have we here, four Pirateers?
Pray, what has ended your careers?
You, sir, (To Slang) speak up, how are
you called?

JOHN SLANG:

Men call me Slang, the pirate bold.
 For buried treasure have I sought.
 I've filled my keels brim full of gold,
 And when at last turned homeward
 bound
 On rocky Slang my keel was split
 Ere I had made my last trip around.
 And so I've come to you
 Who rule the watery sea
 And hold me captive here—
 To beg you set me free.

NEPTUNE:

O ho, so that's the story.
 And have you learned your lesson?

JOHN SLANG:

Aye Sir! Your locks are hoary
 While mine are yet so youthful—
 Pray forgive my errors,
 Believe that I am truthful.
 Set me free upon the sea
 I'll be a peaceful trader—
 Change my name to Robert Graham
 And never more use slang, Sir.

NEPTUNE:

Well said, O Robert Graham.
 Speak properly and trade in peace—
 Six months is your probation.
 Then come to me for your release.
*(Neptune motions him to be seated and
 turns to Double Negative)*
 And you, sir, what is your offense
 For which you show such penitence?

DOUBLE NEGATIVE:

I, too, have foundered on a reef
 For errors, it is my belief,
 That made men call me this of old,
 Double Negative, the bold.

If you will give me but the chance
 You gave my brother, I will be
 Faithful always to Mother Tongue
 And a peaceful trader on the sea.

NEPTUNE:

Well said. Do penance just the same
 As was laid down for brother Graham.
 And you? *(Turning to Split Infinitive)*

SPLIT INFINITIVE

A pirate bold am I
 Who sailed upon the foaming sea.
 I held advice in no regard
 Nor left syntatic errors be
 Until I foundered with a shock
 On Split Infinitive, the rock.
 Now I have learned my lesson true,
 And hope to serve probation too.

NEPTUNE:

Six months will do for you as well
 But if you fail, right here you'll dwell.
 And now the last of the pirate crew
 Tell me, pray, what happened to you?

DANGLING PARTICIPLE:

'Twas just outside the Port Success—
 A trader spoke of danger ahead.
 But I heeded not, and as you guess,
 On a reef my keel was smashed instead.
 I saw 'twas the reef of an error grave,
 "Dangling Participle," and I sank
 'neath the wave.

NEPTUNE:

And you would fain be given a chance
 With your brothers here? Well, then
 advance
 To the upper regions. But never more
 Be guilty of errors as before.

(Curtain).

OVERWORKED WORDS

A Vocabulary Project

LUCY GRUNDLACH

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THE VOCABULARIES of many children are like the wardrobe of the man who claimed he had a suit of clothes for every day in the week, and proved it by saying, "Yes, and this is it," pointing to the suit he was wearing. One word is used over and over again, even when many different shades of meaning are intended. A study of children's compositions, both oral and written, reveals the necessity of enlarging and enriching the vocabularies of the young authors. So many words are overworked.

Miss R— was keenly aware of this situation with her class (Grade 8-A) and determined to do something about it. She realized she was undertaking a difficult task, for her own need was almost as great as that of the children. "Although the pupils will not know it, their teacher will probably be the most benefited person in the class," she told herself.

The first step was to cause the class to be conscious of their need and to initiate a campaign for an enlarged and more serviceable vocabulary. To this end she prepared a little story which she called "Enough Said." A mimeographed copy was given to each pupil to be read silently.

"ENOUGH SAID"

"Mother, may I go to the show tonight?" said Tom.

His mother said that he could not go, but Tom did not give up hope. He bided his time until he was alone with his father after supper. Then Tom said, "Dad, may I go to the show tonight?"

Dad said, "You went last night, and I said then that that was the last time you were going this week."

Just then Mother came in, and, as she had heard what Father said, she said, "You heard what I said when you asked before, that you could not go!"

"What!" said Father, "you come to me after your mother had said you could not go! No! You are going to stay at home."

"But this is a Western show tonight," said Tom, "those next week are just silly love stories."

"You heard what I said, young man," said his father in a loud voice.

"Oh, please let me go!" said Tom, "and I won't ask to go next week."

"That is enough from you, sir," said his father angrily, "now you are going to bed instead. That will be all the movie you will get."

"I don't want to go to bed," said Tom, beginning to cry.

"Go!" said Father. "Good night!"

"G-g-g-good n-n-n-night," said Tom as he slowly left the room.

"That boy is simply crazy about shows," said Mother. "I don't understand how he gets that way."

"Nor I," said Father. "Say, Mother, if there is a good Western show on tonight as Tom said, let's go."

"Yes, let's," said Mother.

And they went.

When all had finished reading this story, Miss R— asked, "Have you anything to say about the story? I saw some smiles as you were reading it."

At first the story situation was commented upon, especially the parental attitude. Before long, however, some one mentioned the too frequent use of the word *said*. "I got tired of seeing *said* so many times," remarked another.

"Would it do to omit the word entirely," asked Miss R—.

"No, we need something there, but different words could be used sometimes."

"What word would you suggest?"

"*Answered* or *replied* could be used in some of the places."

"Read it aloud and use *answered* for *said*."

After the reading of the first line in this way objectors were on their feet. "*Replied* doesn't fit right in the first sentence. You can't reply unless some one else speaks first."

"What word would you use then?"

"*Said* is all right in the first place. It's the other ones that need to be changed."

A little discussion brought agreement on the point that some of the *said*s should be changed for two reasons: variety would make more pleasant reading, and a more careful choice of words would bring out differences in meaning.

"Let us make a list of all the words we can think of to use instead of *said*. By the way, what other expression means the same as *used instead of*?"—"Yes, substitute; now, what might be substituted for *said*?"

These were suggested: answered, replied, asked, shouted, remarked, cried, begged.

"It might help us to see how others have handled this situation," suggested Miss R—. The class took their *Graded Literary Readers* (Book XIII) and turned to the story, "How Jean Valjean Found a Brother" by Victor Hugo (an adaptation). The story was skimmed to find the expressions used to convey the idea in *said*. This was the list:

said	ventured to say	stammered
asked	went on	added
requested	interrupted	exclaimed
replied	continued	cried
resumed	returned	

"Do all these expressions mean the same thing?"

Various shades of meaning were brought out.

"Let us see how many substitutes for *said* we can find by Monday. Then we will try to rewrite our little story to make it more pleasing."

Monday's pooling of efforts produced this composite list:

said	corrected	reiterated
declared	interrupted	echoed
replied	continued	informed
explained	cried	uttered
remarked	whined	ejaculated
added	whimpered	whispered
questioned	requested	murmured
coaxed	roared	argued
ordered	shouted	objected
asked	yelled	prattled
pleaded	stammered	announced
begged	stuttered	proclaimed
retorted	faltered	asserted
consented	repeated	chattered
sneered	screamed	hissed
jeered	queried	
inquired	iterated	

These words were discussed and meanings looked up in the dictionary. Illustrative sentences were given. They then went over "Enough Said," replacing each *said* with a better word. Many of the pupils displayed an unexpected discrimination in deciding upon the right word for each place. The story as revised read as follows:

"ENOUGH SAID"

"Mother, may I go to the show tonight?" asked Tom.

His mother replied that he could not go, but Tom did not give up hope. He bided his time until he was alone with his father after supper. Then Tom inquired, "Dad, may I go to the show tonight?"

Dad remarked, "You went last night and I told you then that that was the last time you were going this week."

Just then Mother came in, and, as she heard what Father said, she exclaimed, "You heard what I answered you when you asked before, that you could not go!"

"What," cried the father, "you come to me after your mother had decided you could not go! No! You are going to stay at home!"

"But this is a Western show tonight," pleaded Tom; "those next week are just silly love stories."

"You heard what I stated, young man," retorted his father in a loud voice.

"Oh, please, let me go!" begged Tom, "and I won't ask next week."

"That is enough from you, sir," roared his father angrily; "now, you are going to bed instead. That will be all the movie you will get."

"I don't want to go to bed," whined Tom, beginning to cry.

"Go!" ordered Father. "Good night!"

"G-g-g-good n-n-n-night," whimpered Tom as he slowly left the room.

"That boy is simply crazy about shows," declared Mother. "I don't understand how he gets that way."

"Nor I," responded Father. "Say, Mother, if there is a good Western show on tonight, as Tom said, let's go."

"Yes, let's," agreed Mother.

And they went.

After the revised form of the story was read, Miss R— continued:

"Of course, you know that this story was written just for this purpose, to show you how unpleasant the too frequent use of any one word will make a composition. You will probably never meet with such an exaggerated use of any word in your reading and I hope you will not be guilty of it in your writing. But it is an easy habit to get into. Just to discover how you yourselves stand in this matter, look over your

old compositions for tomorrow and list the words which you have overworked."

It is the practice in this school to keep all compositions of the current and preceding semesters, so the pupils had ample material with which to work.

This survey resulted in the compilation of two lists. If a word appeared in a fourth or more of the lists, it was placed upon the class list. The others were kept for the individual lists. The following words were placed upon the class list:

and	girl	nice
beautiful	good	polite
big	got	said
boy	interesting	saw
came	like	smart
fine	little	told
funny	mad	took
gave	made	went

The class was divided into four groups, each group taking a fourth of this list for which they were to find synonyms. They consulted text books, library books, and the dictionary. When the groups reported to the class each synonym had to be used in a sentence to show that it was understood. If acceptable, it was placed upon the class list. These were accepted:

and: too, again, also, then, likewise, beside, therefore, nevertheless, yet, but, though, although.

beautiful: lovely, pretty, charming, delightful, handsome, attractive, grand, magnificent, beautiful, elegant, splendid, gorgeous, marvelous, good-looking.

big: large, great, immense, huge, mammoth, gigantic, enormous, stupendous, over-sized, massive, vast, extensive, herculean.

boy: lad, laddie, youth, youngster, chap, son, fellow, gamin, urchin, male.

came: arrived, approached, neared, reached, appeared.

fine: splendid, noble, delightful, admirable, grand.

funny: queer, odd, peculiar, unusual, amusing, strange, laughable.

gave: offered, donated, presented, bestowed, bequeathed.

girl: maid, maiden, daughter, lass, lassie, damsel, sister.

good: excellent, tasteful, delicious, nice, lovely, sweet, innocent, pure, wonderful, favorable, clean, real, helpful.

got: obtained, received, secured, gained, won, bought, purchased.

interesting: exciting, entertaining, gripping, pleasurable, amusing, pleasant, agreeable, thrilling.

like: love, fond of, adore, enjoy, appreciate, relish, care for, regard.

little: small, tiny, wee, minute, miniature, undersized, cute, least, midget, dwarfed.

mad: irate, angry, incensed, offended, enraged, furious, out of patience with.

made: produced, manufactured, constructed, built, erected, fashioned, contrived, composed, created, formed, framed, modeled, shaped.

nice: fine, delicate, good, exact, pretty, kind, suitable, well, pleasing, fastidious, gorgeous.

polite: courteous, courtly, considerable, mannerly, well-mannered, refined, gentlemanly, ladylike, polished, well-behaved.

said: (listed before).

saw: perceived, noticed, observed, realized, discovered, witnessed, noted.

smart: bright, intelligent, thoughtful, careful, sharp, keen.

told: explained, announced, narrated, related, described, bade, commanded, ordered, proclaimed.

took: assumed, appropriated, grabbed, seized, grasped, stole, acquired, accepted, received.

went: departed, passed, withdrew, vanished, left, disappeared, journeyed, retired, traveled, deserted.

The class decided to prepare loose leaf note books in which to keep this list of synonyms and their individual lists. Various titles were selected for these books, as, *Overworked Words*, *My Book of Synonyms*, *Choice Words*, *Take Your Pick*, *Handy Word Book*, *Word Guide*, *My Book and My Words*, "Enough Said."

One girl brought to class a little story she had written, in which she had used all the synonyms for *big* that she could. The class fancied the idea and asked to do the same. So each chose a different word and brought to class the next day a similar story. A few follow:

GOT

"I have a new book," declared John, "I obtained it at the library."

"How did you secure it?" asked Bob, "I thought you did not have a library card."

"I procured a card at the desk down at the library," replied John, "and received an interesting book for my little work."

"Well, I hope you will enjoy the book and that you will derive a great deal of pleasure out of using the library," said Bob.

NICE

"My, but Mary looks nice in her new dress!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown.

"Yes," returned Mrs. Wilson, "I think that she looks more beautiful in that dress than in any other I have seen her wear."

"But I think Jane looks perfectly cunning in that dress Philip gave her. In fact I think she looks simply gorgeous in it," put in her neighbor.

"Do you know, I think Mary has the ability to dress so she looks just wonderful," said Mrs. Brown.

BIG

"Oh, look at that big tree!" exclaimed Mary.

"Isn't it a large one!" replied Jenny.

"I do not believe I have ever seen anything so enormous before," cried Lois.

"Oh, I have! Don't you remember that gigantic tree we saw in California," asked Louise.

"Yes, I do remember it now; it was so huge that you could not see above it," answered Jenny.

"Well," said Mary, "I have never seen any of those mammoth trees, but I think this one is simply immense."

MADE

"I think it is wonderful that our boys have made so many things," exclaimed Mr. Brown.

"Yes, John constructed a bridge with his Meccano this afternoon," replied his wife.

"Bill told me he built a small house at school last winter," said Uncle Joe.

"Jimmie learned to kindle a fire while on a scout hike," added Mr. Brown.

"John modeled a small statue out of clay last week," replied Mrs. Brown.

"Bill has formed a baseball team," Uncle Joe informed them.

Evidence was given of a genuine interest in this work. "Since we began to watch our words, I've noticed that I use very much slang. I know what to do for some of the expressions, but there are others which seem to be the best to be used at the time, and yet I know good speakers and writers do not use them. I'd like to have better words for them," was a statement to which most of the class agreed. Therefore the elimination of slang was included in the project.

Each pupil prepared a list of the so-called slang expressions which he would like to have eliminated from his own and others' vocabularies. When the lists were compiled those most frequently found were as follows and in the order given:

swell, dandy, keen, bunch, kid, sore (at), date, fresh, lots, rotten, loud, spiffy, guy, pep, swiped, bum, peach, brick, yellow, bunk, dumbell, crooked, knew his onions.

It required a rather lengthy discussion to learn just what was meant by some of the expressions. Finally the class produced this list of synonyms in what one pupil called "respectable English."

dandy	} fine, excellent, very good, handsome, elegant, pleasing, stylish, refined, fashionable, elaborate.
swell	
keen	
spiffy	

bunch: gang, set, crowd, group, circle.

kid: boy, youngster, fellow.

sore (at): angry, displeased, offended, out of patience with, annoyed.

date: engagement, appointment, arrangement, agreement.

fresh: familiar, forward, saucy, pert, bold, impudent, rude, daring, impertinent.

lots: (not real slang but used too much) quantities, abundance.

rotten: unpleasant, disagreeable, displeasing, offensive.

loud: vulgar, common, rude, coarse, showy, flashy.

guy: fellow, person, man, boy.

pep: force, vigor, life, animation, energy.

swiped: stole, took.

bum: loafer, idler, ne'er-do-well, vagabond, tramp, (adjective) very poor, useless, worthless, bad.

peach: satisfactory person, good fellow, brick.

yellow: cowardly, sneaking, unreliable, mean, dishonorable.

bunk: nonsense, foolishness.

dumbell: stupid person, simpleton, dunce.

crooked: tricky, dishonest, underhanded.

knew his onions: knew his business, knew what he was about.

The question was raised as to what should be done when they were not sure the word they wanted to use was good English. The class concluded the best thing to do was not to use it unless no other word could be found to convey that particular meaning. Attention was called to the fact that many of our current words were at one time slang, but that they had been transferred from "slanguage" to language because they so effectively and briefly expressed the idea. But they were informed that they had not yet reached, either in years or experience, that position when their usage would determine the propriety of a word, and until then, they would have to accept the standard established by others better qualified.

After the note books were started, Miss R— said to the class, "This is a type of work which we need constantly, every time we speak or write, if we wish to do so well and effectively. But we cannot have more class periods devoted to this work, and it should not be dropped. Can you suggest ways of continuing it?"

These methods were offered and accepted as practical:

1. Use the dictionary freely.
2. Notice the choice of words used by good authors.
3. Notice the vocabularies of good speakers.
4. Read with a dictionary at hand.
5. Read with a note book in which to make note of the words to be looked up later.
6. Try to use the new words learned.
7. Criticise their compositions for choice of words as well as for other types of errors.

"There are two helps with which I think most of you are not yet acquainted and I wish to introduce them to you now. One is

(Continued on Page 215)

IMPROVEMENT OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION

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WHEN WE READ the compositions written by English boys and girls of high-school age, we are impressed by the maturity of thought, the wealth of vocabulary, and the creative power in their work. We are naturally compelled to ask why the compositions of American pupils compare unfavorably with those of the English schools. Disregarding matters of thought and style, when we attempt to measure the quality of our written composition, we can not even boast of accuracy in the mechanics of the sentence. A few teachers have achieved success worthy of praise, and their work has been reported in some of the educational magazines. But, as a rule, most of them deplore the faults of written English in their reports at teachers' conventions, and complain of the failure to secure results that are in any way commensurate with the time and energy expended on the correction of papers.

The following titles taken at random from several recent volumes of educational journals indicate the type of questions that English teachers are asking in their attempts to remedy the situation: Do They Improve?¹ Have All Our Methods in Teaching English Composition Failed?² What Constitutes the Teaching of Composition?³ Is the English Teaching in High Schools Functioning Effectively?

¹ Do They Improve?—J. H. McKee. *English Journal*, Volume XI, December, 1922. Pp. 642-643.

² Have All Our Methods in Teaching English Composition Failed?—N. Otto Birk. *School and Society*, Volume 13, March 26, 1921. Pp. 385-387.

³ What Constitutes the Teaching of Composition?—Zeta Cook Mayhew, *Education*, Vol. 44, October 1923. Pp. 82-91.

In an attempt to find out what teachers of experience are offering in answer to such questions, we have searched the files of the educational journals and various books on the teaching of English for specific suggestions. Roughly classifying the contributions, we have found the following groups emphasized: Group I. Articles on the use of interesting subjects as a means of motivation and enlivening of the composition period. Group 2. Articles advocating minimum essentials as a help in securing the mastery of a few fundamental principles each semester, and in keeping the teacher informed of the work completed by her predecessors. Group 3. Articles urging the use of composition scales and standard achievement tests for measuring the progress of the pupils and systematizing the corrections of mechanical errors. Group 4. Articles supporting the Dalton plan,⁴ which allows the individual to progress as fast as possible; and the group method, which lets the pupils of equal ability advance as rapidly as they can carry out a group project. Group 5. Articles presenting a series of lessons in word study given for the purpose of enlarging the pupil's vocabulary and teaching the use of the dictionary.

Most of these articles seem pertinent to the question and constructive in their criticisms, but they fail to emphasize the great need of better sentence structure and the development of the "sentence sense" as fundamental requirements of written com-

⁴ Teaching English on the Dalton Plan—Lucile Douglas. *English Journal*, Vol. XIII, 1924. Pp. 335-40.

position. Both the French and the English schools excel in composition because they devote much time to précis writing and forms of work requiring the most careful revision of sentences. They put into practice the psychological theory that maturity in sentence structure is indicative of maturity in thinking, and that careful training alone will win the "dual triumph of clear thinking and clear phrasing."⁵

Our schools on the other hand, have frequently regarded excessive drill on sentence structure as laborious work, which only very prosaic persons would find enjoyable. As a result of this attitude, our written composition has usually suffered from inaccuracy.

Many writers merely touch upon the importance of sentence structure or, at best, make casual suggestions that would hardly secure tangible results if they were followed. For example, one teacher finds the remedy of poor sentences "in reading aloud, with the student's ear trained to catch the grammatical unit as he notes the following inflections which mark the end of the sentence."⁶ Another teacher in giving admonitions to young writers, generalizes in this way: "Examine your compositions for sentence structure. Is your sentence sense developing?"⁷ From one with more revolutionary ideas comes the assurance that the panacea for the evils of poor sentence structure is found exclusively in reading good literature. In fact, he argues, "reading rather than practice in writing makes good composition possible, and ingenious devices and technical efficiency lead only to the thing the whole world has risen in arms to slay."⁸ The first two opinions contain an element of truth, but they do not go far enough. Mere suggestions to pupils are hardly sufficient to effect habits of writing. The last quotation

is questionable in the light of experience. There is little danger that technical efficiency in written composition will interfere with the expressions of American pupils. In fact, it would delight us to see a few pupils impressed with the need of precision in writing sentences. We should like them to realize that writing is an art that requires definite training in technique, which is acquired only after long and arduous practice.

Some very sensible views are given by Miss Sara Simons. In speaking of the teaching of written composition she says: "Much practice in the sentence should be given in the junior high school. Such a practice should continue through the course. If our pupils go out from our high schools with a keenly developed 'sentence-sense,' they will be well equipped with a powerful instrument for explaining, persuading, and convincing others to think as they think in any of the social problems of life, and they will have an effective weapon for the attack on social problems which is to be made in the language of the written brief or of the oral debate. Hence, in the language of aviation, they must be given thorough ground training before they are allowed the privilege of flight."⁹

In the training-school department of Clarion Normal School we have been emphasizing the importance of the sentence in every grade. For three years we have been following certain minimum requirements in the hope of developing in the pupils the habit of thinking accurately and constructing correct sentences as a result of that thinking. Each year, as the sentence work has become more highly organized, we have seen a growing desire to improve written English in both students and teachers.

Even in the first grade, exercises are given in which pupils are fully conscious of the effort to express complete thoughts well. Selecting some interesting subject as the center of a conversation lesson, the

⁵ The Teaching of English in the Secondary Schools—Charles S. Thomas. P. 20.

⁶ Freshmen Sentences—William Powers. *English Journal*, Vol. XIV, April 1925. P. 316.

⁷ Suggestions for Improving Written Composition—R. C. Smith. *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 24, June 1924. Pp. 730-31.

⁸ Education and the Qualitative Standard—A. Cram. *Educational Review*, Vol. 57, April 1919. Pp. 304-311.

⁹ English Problems in the Solving—Sara E. Simons. P. 90.

teacher writes on the board the best sentences contributed by the pupils in the discussion. The children then read their own sentences with the feeling that they have been responsible for a written composition.

When the pupils finally learn to write, they are taught to make the transition from the oral to the written composition according to a method suggested by Dr. Paul Klapper.¹⁰ Four or five brief questions are placed on the board in paragraph form:

Have you a dog? What is his name? What is his color? What can he do?

These questions are then answered in simple statements. The result is a short paragraph, frequently lacking in coherence and transitional words, but the children feel that they have written consecutive sentences in a composition like that of the older boys and girls, and they take pride in the achievement.

Progressing step by step through the more independent work of the intermediate grades, the pupils are taught to construct different kinds of sentences—the declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory. The subjects are taken from their own experience and from their literature. Sometimes the idea of variety is impressed by the use of very elementary terms: "What things do," "What is done to things," "What things are," and, "What the qualities of things are." This plan of securing variety, which was borrowed from the New York plan, has met with success in the fifth and sixth grades. The variety of the forms involved is clear, for the active voice, the passive voice, the predicate noun, and predicate adjectives are all employed, even if the children are unconscious of the terms.

Before the pupils reach the seventh grade, they are expected to write sentences in which they are conscious of the terms subject and predicate. These technicalities are taught through an inductive lesson planned with great care by the student

teacher or demonstration teacher. Although this inductive method requires much time, the results always justify its use, especially in the presentation of fundamental principles. If the pupils reach the seventh grade without being able to distinguish between the subject and predicate, the teacher should lay aside the regular work for the sake of an inductive lesson on these essential elements, especially if she hopes for an understanding of clauses later on.

The usual five steps of the inductive process—introduction, presentation, comparison, generalization, and application—can be worked out very effectively. In the introductory step poor sentences may be taken to show the need of the sentence improvement and the reasonableness of the lesson. The presentation requires the framing of numerous sentences, which the teacher writes on the board at the dictation of the pupils. Different kinds of verbs are supplied for a given subject, and subjects, in turn, for a given verb. For example, such forms as these are visualized by the pupils:

Rip Van	{	1. Refused to work.
Winkle		2. Was lazy.
		3. Was scolded by his wife.

1. Murillo	{	painted beautiful pictures.
2. A Spanish Artist		
3. This great man		

The teacher then makes the comparison step vivid by placing side by side fragments of sentences and whole sentences to test the discriminating powers of the pupils, who are asked to decide which ones express complete thoughts. After such a procedure there is little difficulty in having the pupils arrive at the generalization that every sentence has two distinct parts.

The application of the principle determines largely the success of the lesson. All kinds of practice in writing sentences should immediately follow the formulation of the principle. Among the most important exercises are:

¹⁰ The Teaching of English in the Elementary and Junior High Schools. Paul Klapper. P. 42.

1. The writing of sentences in which the subjects and predicates are underlined.
2. The completion of half sentences.
3. The analysis of sentences found in the texts and supplementary reading.
4. Synthetic exercises which provide for original sentences.

Although the inductive lesson is in its very nature rather stereotyped, after it has been presented, the teacher should direct the thought of the pupils to creative work. Leaving the type sentences, she should never be satisfied with such inane statements as:

The apple is red.
I opened the window.
John caught the ball.

No wonder the pupils unconsciously protest against the writing of such unrelated and uninteresting sentences, and appear in a state of apathy during the recitation. Why cannot the formal lesson be carried over immediately to sentence building that requires original expression, and yet accomplishes the same results? Lifeless isolated sentences, even when used for illustrative purposes, hardly satisfy the interests of live children, who need to realize early in their school course that "the world is so full of a number of things" awaiting their discussion.

Diaries containing one or two sentences relating interesting events in the lives of the pupils are helpful in giving the human touch to the writing of the simplest sentences. At the same time they can be made the means of fostering accuracy and weighing the effectiveness of different kinds of sentences. Miss Frances Brennan, in her demonstration classes at Harvard Summer School recently, showed the interest in sentence building that can be aroused in diaries written in the child's ordinary notebook. The pupils seemed to vie with one another in framing good clear sentences that their classmates enjoyed hearing. The

work was not laborious for teacher or pupils.

In the seventh and eighth grades in Clarion, as the pupils learn the functions of the different parts of speech, they continue to apply the new terms in the writing of sentences. As they progress from year to year more attention, of course, is given to the importance of the style used in the beginning and ending of sentences, and the importance of the topic sentence in the development of the paragraph.

The requirements of a subject and predicate for every sentence, which were presented in the inductive lesson described above, have been helpful in correcting the bad habits of sentence fragments. Severity in grading has also been effective, for the pupils who reach the eighth grade have all had drill in the framing of complete sentences and should therefore know better than to offend in writing sentence fragments.

As a remedy for the childish sentences with the subject always placed before the predicate, Mr. Ward's suggestions have proved helpful.¹¹ He says, "Insist that all subjects must not come first. Read the beginning of ten babyishly similar sentences in 'Tom Jones' theme. Then plan to follow Tom up, to hound him to get finally a page on which the subjects do not come first." To justify the reasonableness of these demands, we might add that it is well to read some good models in which adverbs, phrases, and clauses, and even predicate adjectives and adverbs come first in the sentence. The pupils, seeing the means that other writers have employed for varying the beginnings of their sentences, are given an incentive to emulate them. At the same time the teacher can be correlating literature with composition.

The solution of problems growing out of the jerky sentences and poor compound sentences rests in the effective teaching of

¹¹ What is English?—C. H. Ward. Pp. 132-156.

the complex sentence. Stated like the old law of diminishing returns the principle reads: As the number of complex sentences increases, the gratification afforded by other types of sentences naturally decreases. And no matter what training the pupils have had in sentence writing the elimination of certain errors can not be made a matter of "don'ts." Instead, the teacher should attempt to make complex sentences popular. One teacher who was especially eager to improve the sentence work in her school introduced to her pupils the idea that the complex sentence indicated maturity of thought.¹² This idea seemed to appeal to the pride of the students. Subsequent themes were inspected with a view to finding the definite improvement. Additional percentages were awarded to the students who showed the greatest proficiency in complex sentences.

In learning the uses of the complex sentence the pupils should be asked to distinguish between dependent and independent clauses. Underlining the dependent clauses or writing them in red ink calls attention to them. The pupils should also be asked to change words and phrases into clauses, or to unite short sentences by changing one of them into dependent clauses. For example, if a pupil has written, "President Coolidge is staying at his summer home on the coast. He has caught many fish," he will easily see the improvement resulting from such a sentence as this: "President Coolidge, who is staying at his summer home on the coast, has caught many fish."

The teacher should read some of the pupils' poor compound sentences aloud to the class, emphasizing by an exaggerated style of reading the repetition of "ands" and the monotonous effect of the stringy sentence. She can then show the pupils how to shorten the rambling sentence by reducing a clause to a phrase or a phrase to a single word. Such devices, of course,

have to be repeated if permanent results are expected.

In all this sentence work too much emphasis can not be placed upon the use of connectives in determining the strength of sentences. Contrary to Coleridge's idea that a man's connectives are the measure of his intelligence, recent experiments in classes prove that training rather than a man's I. Q. determines the type of connectives he uses.¹³ After a series of lessons on connectives, a noticeable improvement invariably follows, especially in the use of subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns.

Selecting the coördinating conjunctions "and" and "but" and the troublesome "so" as the special pitfalls, the teacher may suggest "yet" and "for" as possible substitutes. A list of the leading subordinating conjunctions left on the board during the discussion of the complex sentences will acquaint the pupils with words that lend variety to their expression. Experiments in the use of "although," "since," "until," and "if" will help to show them the difference in meaning that can be given to dependent clauses.

Hand in hand with the work in connectives goes the discussion of poor subordination, which is usually difficult for pupils to understand. A whole period spent on such sentences as the following will prove beneficial: "I came to school yesterday and I found that I was late." Recasting the first part we have, "When I came to school yesterday, I found that I was late." If sufficient illustrations are given, the pupils readily see the improvement gained by subordinating one part of a sentence and putting the other part in a forceful position.

The pupils in the seventh and eighth grades are guilty of many errors, but we find it is more satisfactory to concentrate on a few of the most important ones. If the teacher is assisted in her work by some

¹² Subjective Emphasis in Written Composition—Charles Weber. *English Journal*, Vol. XIII. 1924.

¹³ A Study in English Connectives—Lydia Schwegler. *English Journal*, Vol. XIV, 1925. Pp. 213-221.

student helpers, she will find it convenient to divide the classes into four groups, which correct respectively the four main groups of errors suggested. These groups should be changed from week to week to allow every member of the class to make some special investigation of each type of error. To make the work as practical as possible, many sentences found in the pupils' compositions should be placed upon the board. Good sentences should be used as well as poor ones in order to test the student's judgment. Any device that makes the student conscious of differences between strong and weak sentences seems desirable.

Opinions differ about the advisability of rewriting compositions to improve them. What ever practice the teacher may choose to follow, it is surely sound pedagogy to demand the revision of faulty sentences, especially when some special principle is violated that has been carefully presented in previous lessons. A sheet of paper left blank at the left of each written page in the pupil's composition book has been found useful for recasting sentences. The teachers using this plan have all been enthusiastic about it.

We may study different methods of presenting the sentence, we may use quarts of red ink¹⁴ in the correction of pupils' errors, and we may have themes written and rewritten; but if we are not exacting in our demands, we shall still continue to deplore the poor quality of the work. As long as students receive a C grade on the ground of subject matter, it will only be human nature for them not to exert themselves in improving technical matters. Although we may resent one teacher's accusation that we have been "mollycoddling"¹⁵ our pupils in teaching composition, we shall have to admit that our lack of concentrated effort in requiring improvement in sentence structure and our placid acceptance of careless

work have been the chief causes of failure in our teaching of written composition.

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¹⁴ A Composition on Red Ink—Alfred Hitchcock.

¹⁵ Mollycoddling in the Teaching of Written Composition—Bonnie Gilbert, Vol. 43, May, 1922. Pp. 570-77.

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OVERWORKED WORDS

(Continued from Page 208)

called a 'Book of Synonyms' and the other is 'Thesaurus'." Copies were shown to the class and their use explained.

Since the little story of "Enough Said" had stimulated the pupils to the search for variety of words, Miss R— gave them another story to stimulate a search for apt words. She read aloud an incident from Chapter XXXVI of Barrie's "Sentimental Tommy."

The selection tells of the contest between Tommy and Lauchlan McLauchlan for a prize that was to be awarded the best essay on "A Day in Church." Tommy started out blithely, while Lauchlan appeared to have much difficulty. But when the essays were handed in, at the end of the allotted time, it was found that Tommy had "stuck in the middle of the second page," and Lauchlan was awarded the prize. Tommy explained that he had spent almost half of the time searching for a Scotch word that would signify how many people were in church. He rejected word after word because it did not fit the meaning. Finally, Tommy's master thrust him out of the school house.

" 'Well,' said Tommy's master, savagely, 'I have one satisfaction, I ran him out of my school.' "

" 'Who knows,' replied Mr. Ogilvy, 'but that you may be proud to dust a chair for him when he comes back?' "

The story was greatly enjoyed. An evidence of appreciation of the point is in the fact that one boy prepared a new cover for his word book, changing the title from "My Book of Synonyms" to "My Tommy Book."

The work is going on. No class period is given over to it, but the pupils are giving much more attention to choice of words in the preparation of their compositions. The dictionary is being consulted much more frequently. In criticism of others' work, this is often heard, "Don't you think that perhaps this word (—) would express your meaning better than the one you used (—)?"

If Miss R— ever uses this project again she will precede and follow it with a vocabulary test. There is no reason why she should not do it again.

VOCABULARY BUILDING IN THE LIBRARY

JEAN P. STEWART

Librarian, Wadena, Minnesota

Ours is a rather small library where combined school and public library work are carried on together in the public library building. For three years we have had a contract with the public school for library service to students. At the time the contract was made, the superintendent decided to send grades four, five, six, seven, and eight to the library for a half hour period each week. The librarian was asked to select and arrange conveniently books for outside reading, suitable for each particular grade. Nothing was said about library instruction, but it soon became apparent that, in coöperation with the teachers, a little more might be accomplished than merely helping to select books for home reading. Consequently, a part of each library period has been used to teach self help in the library.

About the middle of this school year, in calling for brief book reports, we noticed that the majority of the children had a most limited use of language, and were very poor in spelling. Talking the matter over with the teachers, we agreed that the library period, brief as it was, might be used to advantage in broadening their use of English, and incidentally, improving spelling. Our plan called for the use of a blackboard. We therefore had the janitor resurrect one from the school basement, and place it in the library in plain sight of the library class.

Our procedure has been as follows: We read aloud a short selection to each group, something of educational value, of sufficient interest to hold the attention, and within the mental scope of each particular grade. Before the arrival of the children, we write on the blackboard such words or groups of words from the selection to be read, as might be difficult to spell or understand.

Immediately, on the arrival of the children, attention is called to the words on the blackboard. Their meanings are talked over, and correct spelling is stressed. Then the selection is read, slowly, and distinctly.

At the close of the reading, we turn again to the blackboard and ask—In what connection was this word used? or that group of words? Always we indicate the words we wish them to remember to use intelligently.

Each week we call for a written report on the selection read, to be handed in to the library for correction. The following week we take a few minutes to talk over mistakes, or read aloud a particularly good paper. This of course means work for the librarian, but we feel that results are worth the effort.

The selections read we glean from many sources. For grades seven and eight we found many articles in *The Reader's Digest*. We still further condensed some of these articles to suit the time limit and understanding. Typical selections are: *Your Memory Is As You Make It*, *Shouting the Battle Cry of Service*, *Standing Iceberg Guard on the Atlantic*, *Science Invades the Farm*, *The Money Value of a Scientist*, *Uncle Sam—Spendthrift*, *Perpetual Lumbering a Reality*, *Lighthouses Without Keepers*, *Concerning the Rhodes Scholarship*, *The Social Arctic Circle*. All of these possessed enough human interest to hold attention for a brief period.

Grades five and six seemed particularly interested in stories of the lives of familiar authors or inventors. Here we found *When They Were Boys*, by Everett and Reed, and *When They Were Girls*, by Moore, useful. These grades also took kindly to short selections from interesting books such as chapters from *My Journey With Dickens*, and

Christmas Plays and Pleasures, from Kate Douglas Wiggins' My Garden of Memory, or parts of Mary Antin's Promised Land.

With grade four we used selections from the American Book of Golden Deeds, Lives and Stories Worth Remembering, Stevenson's Lighthouses, The Lady With the Camp, and The King and the Singer.

In fact we continually keep open eyes for suitable material from all sources.

The teachers allow one language period in school for the work, and coöperate splendidly. They encourage good work. The children understand that they are expected to reproduce the subject in as nearly the language read as possible. We call for a good beginning, a good ending, and at least one definite, well expressed idea in between.

Since results of this very simple plan are more interesting than the plan itself, the accompanying papers are presented just as they were handed in.

THE KING AND THE SINGER

By ELIZABETH COLSON, Grade 4

The king and his *courtiers* were out hunting one day, when they heard singing in the distance. the king went crashing through the underbrush in his *eagerness* to reach the beautiful *melody*. Now the king had never heard such beautiful music though he had several noted *musicians* at his court. At last they came upon the singer sitting at the bottom of a hill singing to the sky, flowers, hills, and trees. He was a simple *shepherd* and had never heard of the king so he was very much *bewildered* to see him and his courtiers. The king told him to come to his palace. When they got there the king gave orders to give the singer *magnificent garments*. After he was dressed all up fine they took him before the king. The king told him to sing but he could not he was so *bewildered*. So the king told his courtiers to take him to the guest chamber but to guard the door so he could not escape. Next morning when they went in to the room he was gone. The king

was very angry when he found out and he had all the courtiers put to death. The king hunted for a long time but he could not find the singer. After that he was sad hoping for the music he had heard once only. While far up in the mountains where nobody could find him the singer sang to the sky and trees and flowers.

If you ever walk down a long lane at dusk you will hear a beautiful song, it belongs to the wood thrush, but if you put him in a cage he will not sing. That is how the shepherd felt.

CONTINUING THE RHODES SCHOLAR IDEA

By B. H—, Grade 8

Quietly, *unostentatiously* an American gentleman introduced the *international educational scheme* which was one of the reasons for the visit of the Prince of Wales to this country in 1924.

The gentleman's name is Edward S. Harkness. His plan is for the exchange of students between the United States and Great Britain.

Twenty *fellowships* are given annually and each fellowship is for two years. The students must be from the British Isles and graduates from a noted university there. They can be either men or women under (30) thirty years of age. They may go to any university in the United States but not more than (3) three to each university. These students may have (3) three months of travel after their first year at school. The allowance for each pupil is (\$3000) three thousand dollars per year.

More people from the United States travel in Great Britain than the British travel in the United States. Therefore the average American understands the British people better than the British understand us. This international educational scheme substitutes *practical application* for *theoretical discussion*, believing that everyday contact in work and pleasure is a sound way to mutual understanding.

EDITORIAL

OPEN FORUM

ONE PERSON, in contributing a paper to this number of *THE REVIEW*, stated that she prepared the article with the expectation that it would be read for its suggestiveness rather than as a final appraisal of recent method. She expressed a belief that the purpose of the article could best be realized through open discussion at a teachers' meeting.

Her suggestion is thoroughly in harmony with the editorial attitude of *THE REVIEW*. The reader of an educational periodical should not read as if he were accepting a dictum from some high authority. He should read rather with thoughtful consideration, and careful appraisal.

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW has, from its inception, opened its pages to the discussion of subjects upon which there may be divided opinion. It has never desired to champion, in a narrow way, one side of a debatable question. On the contrary, it has endeavored to give all sides an unprejudiced hearing.

Readers of *THE REVIEW* will recall the keen discussion of silent and oral reading in which Mr. C. R. Rounds, Director of English in Elizabeth, N. J., and Dr. G. T. Buswell, of the University of Chicago, participated. More recently, there appeared a debate on the Winnetka Graded Book List. Many persons will recall the highly constructive discussion that took place, as a result of this debate, at the meeting of the Elementary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English in Philadelphia last November.

In almost every number of *THE REVIEW* there appear articles which should stimulate discussion among teachers who are alert to educational progress. In this number the article by Miss Dora V. Smith,

English in the Upper Grades, is thoroughly thought provoking. Of great interest, too, is the paper by Miss Bertha Virginia Nair, *The Improvement of Sentence Structure in Written Composition*. These two articles might be read for differences in point of view concerning method and classroom practices.

The problem of improving sentence structure in written composition is certainly one that every teacher will hear discussed with alert attention. It is, however, a problem in the solution of which there will be no unanimous agreement. Does Miss Nair exceed the boundaries of profitable teaching as presented by Miss Smith, in her discussion of English in the upper grades? Are the two in accord in the teaching of "the functional elements of grammar—taught as functional elements with constant reference to their use in speech or writing"?

Three distinct attacks in word study are given in the three papers, *Overworked Words*, page 204, *Vocabulary Building in the Library*, page 216, and *The Grammatical Error Pirates*, a playlet on page 201. Each paper represents a different method in teaching. *Overworked Words* comes the nearest, perhaps, to the usual successful classroom procedure. *The Grammatical Error Pirates* is an effective dramatization of certain lesson subjects.

Miss Stewart's article on *Vocabulary Building in the Library* is a good example of well organized incidental teaching which so often secures results otherwise difficult of attainment. There is a number of reasons for this. The chief one is that the librarian, by direct observation of the difficulties the children encounter at their work, discovers the real character of their

(Continued on Page 220)

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

SNAKE GOLD. By Hervey White. Decorations by Elizabeth Mackinstry. N. Y., Macmillan, 1926.

The test of a juvenile for boys is in the reading of it by boys. Hence comments by an adult who has only read the book himself without having observed its effects upon more youthful readers is little to the point. The adult reader in this instance makes the prediction, nevertheless, that boys in early adolescence will enjoy "Snake Gold."

There are two reasons for this. In the first place, "Snake Gold" is far from commonplace in story interest. The boy Clint, who makes claim to hero honors does so by right of many strange adventures. The incidents he relates are so melodramatic that the hero loses no modesty in telling his own story. He gains, on the contrary, both importance and dignity thereby. Boys will like the way Clint bears himself in the midst of this all but overwhelming melodrama. Since the hero tells the story, it is quite easy for sympathetic young readers to put themselves in his place—and to imagine themselves in the shoes of Clint.

The second reason for this book's appeal to boys is its trick of putting broad, manly shoulders on a young boy. Clint, on his own merit, in his own rights, meets them all—man to man. He becomes what every boy aspires to be, a man moving among men. He is a boy but does a man's part, better than any man among them. Clint knows this; he knows that they all know it.

Is there any doubt, then, that boys will like this book?

S. D.

TAXIS AND TOADSTOOLS. Verses and Decorations by Rachel Field. Garden City, Doubleday, Page, 1926.

The delights of city and country are impartially set forth in "Taxis and Toad-

stools," a book of verses written and illustrated by Rachel Field. "Taxis," "Good Green Bus," "Chestnut Stands," and "The Animal Store," treat, as their titles indicate, pleasant subjects heretofore neglected in poetry.

"If I had a hundred dollars to spend,
Or maybe a little more,
I'd hurry as fast as my legs would go
Straight to the animal store.

"I wouldn't say 'How much for this or that?'
'What kind of a dog is he?'
I'd buy as many as rolled an eye,
Or wagged a tail at me!"

Other verses deal with islands, lighthouses, wood-strawberries, and fairies, and in many cases show an elfish touch. Occasionally, there is a note of poignancy and wistfulness, definitely marking a few of the poems as adult.

The pictures are simple and gay, and the verses are worthy of an audience of children.

D. B.

GRADED DRILL EXERCISES IN CORRECTIVE ENGLISH, ORAL AND WRITTEN. Books One, Two, and Three. By William B. Boylan and Albert Taylor. New York, Noble and Noble, 1925, 1926.

It has been recognized that, even aided by the most patient teaching, rules of grammar do not make pupils skillful users of language. The acceptance of this fact has brought about the use of devices for the purpose of instilling correct habits of language.

Such devices are included in Graded Drill Exercises in Corrective English, Oral and Written, by William A. Boylan, and Albert Taylor, both of the New York City Public Schools. There are three of these books for use from grade four through

grade nine. The exercises have been tried experimentally for grade placement and effectiveness.

A psychologist might object to the presentation of incorrect forms in Book I, where the section on correct usage contains such headings as "'Haven't Any' for 'Ain't Got None.'" "'He Doesn't' for 'He Don't.'" Both the correct and the incorrect forms are given in the same type, and are set in paragraph form, so are almost equally prominent.

The books are very complete. Although there is no guide to minimum essentials, a teacher could, if necessary, select those exercises which deal with the faults her pupils seem especially liable to.

D. B.

STORIES AND POEMS FOR OPENING EXERCISES. By Elizabeth Ohr. Chicago, American Library Association, 1927.

With a vision, no doubt, of countless beset teachers and impatient children pouring over rows of books in search of a story or poem for school programs, Elizabeth Ohr, who heads the School Libraries Division of the Indianapolis Public Library, has prepared an index called *Stories and Poems for Opening Exercises*.

Not only has Miss Ohr compiled a list of works suitable for delivery at opening exercises, but she has grouped them under some two hundred headings, alphabetically arranged, so that if an exercise of this kind is to fall about February 22, one may look under *Flags, Independence Day, Memorial Day, Patriotism* or *George Washington* for material which bears, in some sense, on the topic of Washington.

Other subjects, taken at random, are *Mystery Stories, Love of Home, Bees, Internationalism, Cheating, Nonsense Stories*. Nature stories and poems are abundant, as are works on *Animals, the Bible, Flowers, Courage, Selfishness, Spring and the Wind*. All of the ordinary needs are filled, and many of the less usual. Energy is there, as are *Advice, Egotism, Frogs, Ingenuity, Good Luck, Loquacity*. The important holidays are well observed—the New Year, Valentine's Day, Easter, April Fools' Day, May Day, Decoration Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving, Christmas.

A key lists forty-one books in which the recommended selections are to be found. The moderate cost of these books gives the index a highly usable and useful application.

A. L. A.

EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 218)

needs, and upon this discovery builds her plan of instruction. Miss Stewart has confidence in what she is doing, and there is evidence that the results justify her in the introduction of word study into the library.

There are, though, many librarians who will ask: Is work such as this within the province of the librarian? They will point to other tasks which must be left undone while the librarian endeavors to meet the exacting requirements of an instructional

program such as this. Miss Stewart's rejoinder might be that nothing could be more fundamental than an understanding of words, and that an intelligent and inquisitive interest in words is the surest means of development in reading.

Such are the questions that may be asked as the reader thumbs the pages of *THE REVIEW*. The value of his reading depends as much, perhaps, upon the character of his own questions as upon the matter he reads.